

Contact:

Cathy Haibach
haibachc@ada.org
312.440.2544

Give Kids A Smile[®] Celebrates 15th Anniversary
ADA Foundation program provides free dental education, prevention and treatment services

CHICAGO, February 3, 2017—Today marks the national kickoff and 15th anniversary of the ADA Foundation’s Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) program, through which hundreds of thousands of children in need receive free oral health education, screening, preventive care, and treatment services from volunteer dentists, dental team members, and others each year. Thanks to more than 550,000 volunteers, more than 5.5 million children have received free oral health services through GKAS since its inception.

Rutgers School of Dental Medicine in Newark, New Jersey, is hosting this year’s national GKAS kickoff. More than 300 children are expected at today’s event. All of those kids will receive pro bono dental screenings, examinations, and preventive treatments delivered by more than 100 Rutgers student and faculty volunteers. Hundreds of children from Essex County grade schools will receive a cleaning, a fluoride treatment, an oral health goody bag, and advice on taking care of their teeth and gums. The RSDM Galloway, Somerdale, and Northfield clinics, and Rutgers’ School of Health Related Professions in Scotch Plains also participate in the GKAS program.

“This is a time to celebrate all that GKAS has accomplished during the past 14 years. So many good things have occurred, but we realize there is still more to do in the years ahead,” said Dr. William R. Calnon, President, ADA Foundation. “The passion obvious at Rutgers is what energizes the program. It is driven by people wanting to truly make a difference.”

“Rutgers is honored to host the kick-off of Give Kids A Smile today,” said Cecile A. Feldman, Dean of Rutgers School of Dental Medicine. “Since it began 15 years ago, GKAS has been tremendously successful at raising public awareness of the importance of oral healthcare for children, especially those who ordinarily don’t have access to dentists and whose families may lack knowledge of proper care. Dentists and dental students all over America have been reminded that we can make a difference in the

lives of kids who aren't fortunate enough to get a check-up every six months. Because of GKAS, millions of smiles are brighter."

Rutgers' event is one of at least 1,300 Give Kids A Smile events scheduled to take place throughout 2017. Events range from those similar to Rutgers', which provide services to hundreds of children in a day, to individual dentists providing pro-bono oral health services and a dental home to one or several children under the Give Kids A Smile banner.

The program would not be possible without the support of its generous sponsors, including Henry Schein, Inc., which has served as the program's official products sponsor since its launch in 2003.

"No matter how many years go by, our commitment to the Give Kids A Smile program only grows stronger," said Stanley M. Bergman, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Henry Schein. "Poor oral health is a silent epidemic affecting our children, and we are pleased to support the dedicated oral health professionals who give so generously of their time and talent. Together with our supplier partners, the ADA Foundation, and the thousands of volunteers who help kids in need throughout the year, we are truly 'helping health happen.'"

CareCredit, a provider of healthcare financing, is the founding donor of the ADA Foundation's Give Kids A Smile Fund. A portion of CareCredit's annual donation will be used to help fund oral health services rendered during the national kickoff event at Rutgers.

"As the Founding Donor of the ADA Foundation's GKAS Fund and member of the GKAS National Committee since its inception, CareCredit is continually impressed by the high level of nationwide private/public collaboration to serve our country's underserved, most vulnerable children," said Cindy Hearn, Senior Vice President, Marketing for CareCredit. "The impact on millions of children is undeniable and remarkable."

The GKAS program originated in 2002 in St. Louis. The ADA launched it nationally in 2003 as a way for dentists to join with others in the community to provide free dental services to underserved children. Initially a one-day event in February, the program has since grown to include events of all descriptions, year-round. Give Kids A Smile is also the anchor event of the ADA's National Children's Dental Health Month.

For more information about how Give Kids A Smile programs are organized across the country, please visit ADAFoundation.org/gkas. For more information about Give Kids A Smile programs taking place in your area, please call Give Kids A Smile at 844.490.GKAS (4527) or [contact your state or local dental association](#). The ADA Foundation's website, ADAFoundation.org, offers additional resources to

help find free or reduced-cost dental care for children. To learn about mouth healthy habits, please visit MouthHealthy.org, which features fun quizzes, slideshows, videos and articles about dental health topics for every age and stage of life, plus the ADA Dental Symptom Checker.

Editor's Note: Reporters are invited to follow the ADA on Twitter @AmerDentalAssn

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About the ADA Foundation

As dentistry's premier philanthropic and charitable organization, the ADA Foundation is a catalyst for uniting people and organizations to make a difference through better oral health. The ADA Foundation provides more than \$800,000 in grants, scholarships, and awards annually to programs that are in alignment with the organization's four mission pillars: Charitable Assistance, Access to Care, Research, and Education (C.A.R.E.). As part of these efforts, the ADA Foundation oversees Give Kids A Smile® and also oversees the ADA Foundation Volpe Research Center in Gaithersburg, Maryland (formerly the Paffenbarger Research Center). For more information about the ADA Foundation, visit www.adafoundation.org.

About the American Dental Association

The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing more than 161,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA's state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly *The Journal of the American Dental Association* (JADA) is the ADA's flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit ADA.org. For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA's consumer website MouthHealthy.org.